

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 671

By Pitts

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Jason Braxton "Bret" Smith of Pleasant View.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the untimely death of Jason Braxton "Bret" Smith; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Smith was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Smith served with acumen and alacrity as a math teacher and the tennis coach at Clarksville Academy, in which positions he earned the respect of his peers and students alike for the exemplary quality of his work and the abundance of caring and understanding he brought to the roles; and

WHEREAS, born January 4, 1969, in Nashville to Starlene Pigue Sykes and Judge Charles W. Smith, Bret Smith first moved to Clarksville at the age of three, just before his sister, Stacy Smith Leiser, was born; and

WHEREAS, while growing up in Clarksville, he attended Barksdale Elementary through the fourth grade, when he enrolled at Clarksville Academy, which he attended from the fifth grade through his graduation in 1987; and

WHEREAS, a talented athlete and musician and a natural leader among his peers, Bret Smith excelled in tennis, played football, stood as President of the Key Club, acted in the senior play, and was the drummer for Vanilla Thunder during his years at Clarksville Academy. He also received numerous awards, including a host of superlative designations, the Kiwanis Club scholarship, and the coveted Headmaster's Award; and

WHEREAS, following his graduation from high school, Mr. Smith matriculated to the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, from which he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in computer science; while a student at the University of Tennessee, he was a valued member of the water ski team and an accomplished jet skier; and

WHEREAS, following his graduation, Bret Smith embarked upon a cross-country motorcycle journey with his father and sister. It was on this journey, when the trio were travelling through the Badlands of South Dakota, that he met Dr. Alex Childs, who had just completed her doctorate in psychology and was making a solo motorcycle trek to California; the two were destined for one another, and were joined in marriage in 1997; and

WHEREAS, following their marriage, the couple moved to Cumberland, Rhode Island, and Mr. Smith worked at the national headquarters of CVS Pharmacy before deciding to enter the education arena. After departing the corporate realm, he completed his teacher certification at Providence College; and

WHEREAS, Bret Smith joined the teaching staff at Clarksville Academy in 2006, quickly endearing himself to his fellow teachers and his students, and soon thereafter became the academy's tennis coach. In addition to his deep impact as a teacher, he also earned accolades as the tennis coach, taking two players to the state championships this year; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Smith took a thorough enjoyment in life and the people around him; he was well-liked by all who met him, by his students, and by his neighbors in the Weakley Field neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, a talented and artistic man, Bret Smith accomplished all the goals he set for himself, be they large or small in scale, and could build anything he envisioned. He constructed a theater for his children in the attic of their home, complete with stadium seating and a catwalk; taught himself to play the harmonica, becoming so adept that, within a year, he was playing the instrument in a band twice each week; and built a barn and a hangar to facilitate and house the airplane he constructed; and

WHEREAS, he was deeply devoted to his family, and always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Bret Smith enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife, Alexandra Childs Smith, and was the proud father of Georgia and Elvis; and

WHEREAS, he will be sorely missed by his father and stepmother, the Honorable Charles Walter Smith and Cindy Podurgal Chambers, his mother and stepfather, Starlene Pigue Sykes and Joe Sykes, and his sister and brother-in-law, Stacy and Jeff Leiser, and a host of friends and family members and fellow pilots, teachers, coaches, musicians, motorcycle riders, and students; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Smith leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Bret Smith, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Smith.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.